

Yankees Prepared for a Strike; Mets View It With Uncertainty

Blue Jays Lose, 5-1, to Griffin, Rookie

By GERALD ESKENAZI
Special to The New York Times

TORONTO, May 22 — Wearing worried looks instead of winners' smiles, the New York Yankees barely savored a 5-1 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays tonight in light of a threatened baseball strike that would force the players to return home tomorrow.

No matter tonight's outcome, there were golden moments for a pair of Yankee rookies, Mike Griffin, who gained his first major league pitching victory, and Joe Lefebvre (pronounced luh-FAY), who homered in his first major league game. The blow that broke a 1-1 tie, however, was a two-run double in the eighth inning by another Yankee rookie, Bobby Brown.

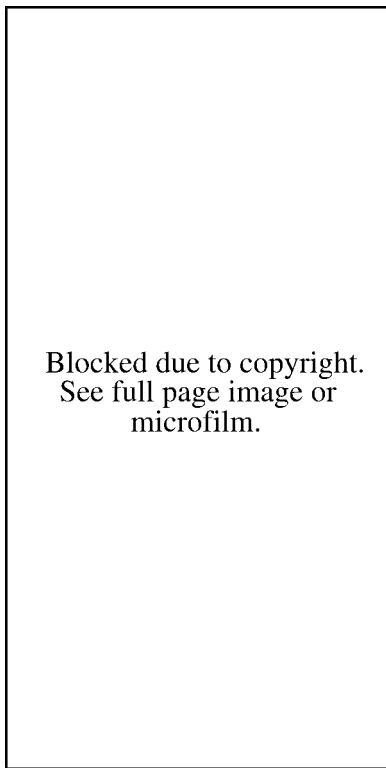
For Rich (Goose) Gossage, who successfully pitched the final two innings, the night was "despressing. I don't want to do it, but if we have to go on strike, then we'll do it."

Jackson Has Big Check

The Yankees have been prepared for this day for weeks, especially Reggie Jackson, their player representative, who repeatedly tells questioners that he "welcomes a strike," despite his annual baseball salary of more than a half-million dollars.

"I'm supposed to cash a check for \$50,000 on June 1," Jackson said yester-

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The New York Times

Gene Michael

Relief Corps Shelled as Astros Win, 8-5

By JOSEPH DURSO

On an evening of strained emotions with a lot more at stake than a baseball game, the New York Mets took a 8-5 beating from the Houston Astros last night and then left Shea Stadium without knowing whether they would be on strike today.

While the labor negotiators talked into the early morning hours in Manhattan, the players on both teams dressed after the game in the glare of television lights and with uncommon commotion in the locker room. Then, still not sure of their fate, the Astros headed by bus for Philadelphia and the Mets scattered for their homes while a few front-office executives kept the vigil in Manager Joe Torre's office.

"When I wake up," said Pat Zachry, "I'll telephone somebody, or everybody, and find out if we're on strike. If we are, maybe I'll get a catcher's mitt for my wife and throw to her in the backyard to stay in shape."

Torre, sitting barefooted in his baseball underwear and smoking a large

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Yanks Expect Strike and Plan Accordingly

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day in front of some other players, who merely looked at one another and then at the floor.

Yet there were smiles from many Yankees in the early hours today, after they had defeated the Tigers at Detroit, 9-5, in 11 innings last night and "clinched" the American League's Eastern Division championship — that is, if the strike caused no more games to be played this season.

No Smiles for Michael

In the two-engine charter plane that brought the team here, Fred Stanley shouted to his manager, "A helluva way to wrap up a pennant, Howser!"

But Gene Michael, the general manager, was not smiling this morning as he arrived while his players slept late. Virtually all of them for some days have held return-flight tickets to New York or Newark for tomorrow.

"No, we can't pay for their way going home," said Michael. "We can't condone them going home. They're supposed to be working for us throughout the whole season. That would be helping them."

But Michael said that any injured Yankee player would be welcome at the Stadium for physical therapy. "That's the only hope we can give them," he added.

Michael was in Toronto to meet with Manager Dick Howser and the coaching staff while Cedric Tallis, the executive vice president, remained in New York to stay on top of the strike situation.

Coaches to Stay on Salary

No Yankee player on the roster will be paid during a strike. Jackson is paid on a year-round basis and the money that he already has received will be deducted from his checks in the future.

Oscar Gamble, an outfielder on the disabled list, will not be paid, according to Michael.

The Yankees will, however, keep their coaching staff on salary and will deploy the coaches for scouting and in-

structional tasks in the minor leagues. Baseball coaches, who are mostly former players, are in a peculiar position because their pensions are paid by the Major League Baseball Players Association. The association permits each club to allow four coaches to participate in the plan.

"Me and Stan Williams are the newest coaches," said Jeff Torborg, "so we won't get pension credit during the strike. But we're not on strike, so we'll get paid."

Players, meanwhile, would have to remain in shape on their own and manage their finances without the guaranteed paycheck. The Yankee trainer, Gene Monahan, contends that once a strike lasts beyond three weeks, "it could be difficult for the pitchers."

With that in mind, Luis Tiant, said: "Me and seven other guys are going to Mexico City. They've been playing ball there for a few months. I'm going to pitch batting practice every day."

However, Bobby Murcer said he would go to work for a friend's apparel company in New York.

"I've got to figure this as if I'll never play baseball again," the 34-year-old outfielder said. "I've got to have a job when this is over."

For Dom Scali, a former St. John's University star who is the bull pen catcher, a honeymoon is possible. He was married last Sunday. Because he is not a member of the players association, he would remain on salary. He also has a jewelry business.

Tom Underwood, the pitcher, says he

would not go home "because I don't want to get too comfortable."

Rudy May, though, said he would go to California Lutheran College and "throw and simulate as if it were a season. But if this strike lasts more than two weeks, they're not going to just be able to settle it on a day's notice. They'll have to give the pitchers three, four days to return."

Lou Piniella also was concerned. Normally, the Yankees are ushered through customs as a team when they enter or leave Canada. Now they might have to go home on their own.

"I don't have a birth certificate, a driver's license, or anything with me. How am I going to leave this place?" Piniella said.

Mets Hesitant About Shutdown

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cigar, ate a pretzel and said:

"I can't go home, my boss is still here. But I told the players they could come in the locker room, even if there's a strike, and get their stuff. If not, we play the Atlanta Braves this weekend. I'm not giving in to it until it happens."

The air of uncertainty had been gripping the players since they reported for work around 4:30 in the afternoon, and it was still there while the Astros were whacking five pitchers for 17 hits before a small crowd of 7,812 persons. The Mets got 13 hits off Joe Niekro and Frank LaCorte, but their pitching staff clearly had other things on their minds.

The tension erupted in the eighth inning when Lee Mazzilli was called out on strikes by Dave Pallone, the umpire who ejected Torre from Tuesday night's game after a raging argument. This time, Mazzilli dramatized his anger by sweeping dirt across home plate with his handkerchief and flinging his bat and several towels, and then he was thumbed out, too.

"I don't know why he threw me out," the 25-year-old first baseman said later. "I just told him he stunk. He's incompetent."

Earlier, before the game, the Mets marked the countdown with curiosity. Mazzilli, who signed a long-term contract last year for \$400,000 a season, considered the stakes and said:

"The situation in baseball is out of hand. The club owners had their way for 100 years, they really had the upper hand. It's only been the last four years that the players had the right to become free agents. So this is ridiculous."

Cashen Addressed Players

Frank Cashen, the general manager, said that he had chosen to address the players before Wednesday night's game because that may have been the most suitable time for a "last word."

"I did my thing then," he said yesterday, "because I felt that there would be too much tension around here the closer we got to a strike. And there

were a number of things I wanted to make clear to the players, about now and about the future."

John Stearns, the 28-year-old catcher and the team's player representative, also spoke to the Mets before the game Wednesday and again before last night's game. One reason for the briefings, he said, was to avoid the kind of confusion that prompted 16 Mets to leave the training camp in Florida abruptly after the Players Association had voted to boycott the final week of exhibition games in April.

"We're not planning any workouts," Stearns said, "but we don't want anybody to be confused. I gave everybody a printed list of everybody else's telephone number so that the guys can stay in touch. We won't hold any group workouts, but we do want to set up contact groups to pass along information."

'A Self-Enforcing Situation'

"I'm also advising the players not to leave New York for a day or so, in case this thing gets settled. Also, they shouldn't leave town without calling the office of the Players Association. But everybody understands that this is it. We've been told not to play Friday unless notified otherwise. It's a self-enforcing situation."

Most people agreed that a prolonged layoff would stall the rebuilding program of the Mets, who had won 13 of their 33 games before last night, including a 5-1 victory over the Astros on Wednesday.

Joel Youngblood, who signed for \$300,000 a year after leading the team with 16 home runs last season, recently bought a house in Connecticut and said he would head there.

"I'm about three miles from [Craig] Swan and not far from Tom Seaver," the 28-year-old outfielder said. "If we don't play, I'll stay home and work on my house, paint the inside, do some heavy stuff outside."

If the Mets were distracted by all the uncertainty, the distraction showed when they took the field against the Astros.

In the first inning, Mark Bombardier surrendered a home run to Craig Reynolds, plus two other hits. Then he gave up two more hits in the second and was relieved by Kevin Kobel, who was raked with four hits and two more runs in the third. After a two-run home run by Cesar Cedeño in the fifth, Kobel was replaced by Tom Hausman, who was tagged for five hits in two innings, including run-scoring singles by Enos Cabell and Alan Ashby.

By then, the Astros were leading by 8-2 and Niekro was struggling with his knuckleball. But the Mets made it closer in the seventh with three runs that chased Niekro, the haymaker being a two-run double into the right-field corner by Mike Jorgensen.

Mets Box Score

HOUSTON					METS				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Landestoy 2b	6	1	3	0	Mazzilli 1b	4	1	1	0
Reynolds ss	5	1	2	1	Ramirez 3b	4	0	0	0
Puhl rf	4	0	0	0	Taveras ss	5	1	4	0
Cruz lf	5	0	2	0	Jorgensen rf	5	2	2	2
Leonard 1b	5	2	1	0	Mynn p	5	0	2	0
Bergman 1b	0	0	0	0	Morales cf	4	0	1	0
Cabell 3b	3	3	3	1	Glynn p	0	0	0	0
Gonzalez 3b	1	0	0	0	Hodges ph	1	0	0	0
Cedeno cf	5	1	2	2	Henderson lf	4	1	3	1
Ashby c	5	0	2	2	Maddox 3b	2	0	0	0
Pujols c	0	0	0	0	Flynn 2b	4	0	0	0
Niekro p	4	0	2	1	Bombardier p	0	0	0	0
LaCorte p	1	0	0	0	Kobel p	1	0	0	0
					Norman ph	1	0	0	0
					Hausman p	0	0	0	0
					Pacella p	0	0	0	0
					Cardenal rf	1	0	0	0

Totals 44 8 17 7 Totals 37 5 13 3
Houston 102 021 200-8
Mets 010 100 300-5

E — Taveras, Maddox, Gonzalez. DP — Houston 2, Mets 1. LOB — Houston 11, Mets 9. 2B — Henderson, Leonard, Niekro, Jorgensen. 3B — Henderson. HRs — Reynolds (2), Cedeno (3). SB — Landestoy, Leonard.

IP H R ER BB SO									
Houston									
Niekro (W 5-3)	6 2/3	11	5	4	3	3			
LaCorte (S 4)	2 1/3	2	0	0	1	3			
Mets									
Bombardier	1 1/3	5	1	1	0	0			
Kobel (L 0-4)	3 2/3	6	4	4	0	0			
Hausman	1	5	3	2	0	1			
Pacella	1	0	0	0	0	2			
Glynn	2	1	0	0	1	2			
HBP — by Bombardier (Cabell). Wild Pitch — Niekro 2. PB — Ashby. T — 2:55. A — 7,812.									

Yankees Box Score

YANKEES					TORONTO				
	ab	r	h	bi		ab	r	h	bi
Randolph 2b	2	0	0	0	A. Griffin ss	5	1	2	0
Murcer dh	5	0	1	0	Bailor 3b	5	0	1	0
Jones cf	5	1	1	0	Woods lf	4	0	2	1
Nettles 3b	5	1	1	0	Velez dh	3	0	0	0
Spencer 1b	3	1	0	0	Mayberry 1b	3	0	0	0
Brown lf	4	1	2	2	Boseffi cf	3	0	0	0
Lefebvre rf	3	1	1	1	Bonnell rf	4	0	1	0
Cerone c	2	0	1	1	Ainge 2b	4	0	2	0
Dent ss	4	0	1	1	B. Davis c	2	0	0	0
					Upshaw ph	1	0	0	0
					Whitt c	1	0	0	0

Total 33 5 8 5 Total 35 1 8 1
Yankees 000 000 140-5
Toronto 000 100 000-1

E — A. Griffin. DP — Toronto 2, LOB — Yankees 9, Toronto 10. 2B — Woods 2, Ainge, Brown. HR — Lefebvre (1). SB — Brown, Cerone, Jones. SF — Cerone.

IP H R ER BB SO									
Yankees									
M. Griffin W, 1-2	7	7	1	1	1	3			
Gossage	2	1	0	0	2	3			
Toronto									
Stieb L, 4-2	7 1/3	7	5	5	6	4			
Buskey	2 1/3	1	0	0	1	0			
Garvin	1	0	0	0	0	1			
PB — Whitt. T — 2:31. A — 26,047.									